



EDITORIAL

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ajhs.v36i3.1>

CANCER OF OESOPHAGUS

Cancer of oesophagus continues to be a major cause of morbidity and mortality in the world. Difficulties in swallowing (dysphagia) is a cardinal symptom in cancer of the oesophagus. It becomes even more important when it is associated with cough on swallowing liquids which often indicates communication with airway through a fistula or nerve involvement. These two symptoms when they occur together often indicate cancer of the upper part of oesophagus. Early diagnosis is the key to successful palliative treatment.

This condition affects all age groups from the age of 20 years upwards. Unfortunately, its diagnosis is late making any palliative treatment difficult and unrewarding. Worse still, the condition affects many young people as well. Options for treatment when a fistula is present remain few because of multi system involvement

namely, digestive, respiratory and early involvement of nervous system.

Difficulty in swallowing has several courses depending on location or origin and other organs involved. Difficulty in swallowing is divided into oropharyngeal and oesophageal dysphagia tends to be caused by nerve and muscular dysfunction while oesophageal dysphagia tends to be due to blockage.

It is vitally important that dysphagia in all age groups should be investigated and treated as early as possible. Difficulty in swallowing in all age-groups should be investigated and treated as early as possible.



*African Journal of
Health Sciences*

Dr Hudson A. Lodenyo,
Consultant Physician & Gastroenterologist
Centre for Clinical Research

**KENYA MEDICAL RESEARCH
INSTITUTE (KEMRI)**